

September 13, 2018

Open Letter of Concern From UW Police Leadership & WFSE Local 1488 Members

TO: UW Leadership including UW President Ana Mari Cauce,
Vice-President for Human Resources Mindy Kornberg, and
Assistant Vice-President for Labor Relations Peter Denis

FR: Undersigned Members of WFSE Local 1488 Police Management Bargaining Unit

RE: Concerns with Leadership in the UW Police Department

On behalf of the members of the Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE) Local 1488's Police Management Bargaining Unit, all six of the University of Washington Police Department's Patrol Sergeants and the undersigned Lieutenants, regretfully write this letter. Unfortunately, circumstances have left us with no other recourse. We have lost trust, faith, and confidence in the leadership abilities of UW Police Chief John Vinson, to effectively lead our Department.

Chief Vinson has fostered an atmosphere of hostility, retaliation, and unethical behavior. A recent example of this would be in his June 20, 2018 interaction with a subordinate (during a WFSE-UW joint labor management meeting) where he stated "You don't like overtime, you'll be working this weekend to cover gaps! Sergeants aren't going to like this" when addressing our union's proposal to stop the Department's use of officers outside our union's bargaining unit as "Acting Sergeants."

Additionally, Chief Vinson has made other decisions or failed to make decisions that we find extremely concerning, including hiring UW Police Officers with questionable backgrounds, failing to respond to citizen concerns regarding the behavior of officers on duty, and failing to adequately prepare the Department for the most effective responses possible to active-shooter situations. We believe Chief Vinson's lack of leadership, mismanagement, and poor policy decisions have damaged the reputation of the department and its ability perform our public safety mission.

Sergeants and Lieutenants have tried to address these and other workplace problems with Chief Vinson, but these efforts have not been successful. We feel Chief Vinson has brought morale to an all-time low, and that his lack of leadership and poor management style has begun to affect retention and recruitment of qualified personnel. Chief Vinson has established a pattern and practice of inequitable treatment of Department personnel, and uses internal investigations and threats of disciplinary action as a means to intimidate UWPd staff.

Chief Vinson's inaction to resolve problems within the UW Police Department jeopardizes the safety of the entire University of Washington community. Examples of issues that affect campus safety include the maintenance of inadequate staffing levels, forcing inexperienced/unqualified dispatchers to learn their jobs without adequate training, and providing poor quality equipment such as broken radios, inoperable/insufficient vehicles, or not providing enhanced body armor and other associated equipment necessary to effectively respond to active-shooter situations.

For the past six years, we have tried to work with Chief Vinson on these and many other issues within the UW Police Department. We have attempted to deal with these matters at the lowest level, and internally it only yielded negative results and the retaliation of Chief Vinson. Chief Vinson has also negatively affected employee morale by engaging in numerous departmental re-organizations, and failing to recruit and retain a permanent Deputy Chief who has the confidence of staff.

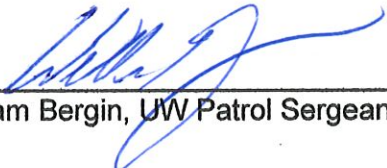
As hard-working and loyal members of the University of Washington Police force, we only wish to focus on bettering our Department and protecting UW students, faculty, and staff. Due to the seriousness of our concerns, **we are requesting that the University of Washington Office of the President place Chief Vinson on administrative leave and engage an outside, independent, third party entity to conduct an investigation into the fitness of Chief Vinson to continue leading the UW Police Department.**

Furthermore, **we would like our union, WFSE, to be offered the opportunities to provide meaningful input in the selection of an outside investigator, and to be able to participate in all interviews with our members, upon the request/consent of WFSE members being interviewed.**


Thank you in advance for your attention to these important matters. We would like to request that you please respond to this letter before Monday, October 01, 2018. You can contact us through UWPM, Shop Steward Sgt. Anthony Stewart, via email at anthos2@uw.edu or 206-616-7886.

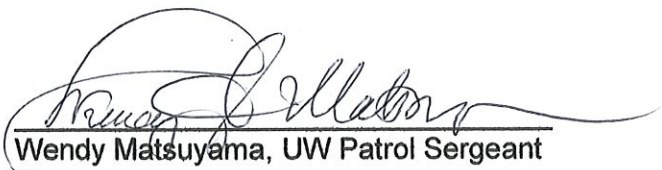
We look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely,

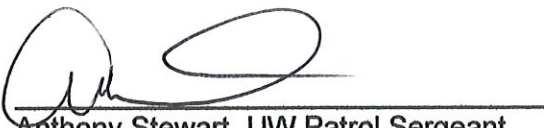

William Bergin, UW Patrol Sergeant

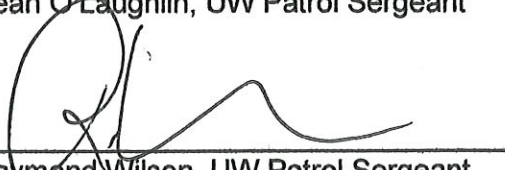

Melvin Daoang, UW Patrol Sergeant


Kevin Jackson, UW Patrol Sergeant


Wendy Matsuyama, UW Patrol Sergeant


Sean O'Laughlin, UW Patrol Sergeant


Anthony Stewart, UW Patrol Sergeant


Raymond Wilson, UW Patrol Sergeant


Douglas Schulz, UW Lieutenant